

Heermanns Song Sparrows cannot fail to prove interesting and we hope to so clearly point out the difference in plumage that anyone who is present cannot fail hereafter to correctly identify any of the birds he may meet.

Now as to corresponding members. While we have a sufficient number of members in this locality to make our meetings lively and interesting, we wish to have the assistance of any and all energetic ornithologists in the state, and in return feel we can benefit them. Though a cordial invitation will be always extended to them to be present whenever an opportunity presents, we know it will be largely through correspondence that they will give the Club the results of their study and in return receive reports from other members. To this end we will issue a monthly bulletin, which will be edited by several active members residing in San Jose or vicinity. It will contain accounts of the two preceding meetings, and the outline of study for the one following. Each corresponding member will be expected to do his share of the work and make reports of his observations on any species or family of birds the club may have under consideration. These reports, coming from members in various sections of the state, will serve to show the distribution of the bird we are studying. The reports from our corresponding members will be read before the Club and comparisons made, and a full report of the meeting will appear in the Bulletin.

It will be plainly seen that the editing of the Bulletin will incur considerable expense and to cover this an entrance fee will be charged corresponding members of 50 cents, which when remitted to the Treasurer at College Park will entitle you to membership in the Club. Please give the matter careful consideration.

In addition to having a course of study to be pursued, recreative articles will be prepared and read before the Club. The officers for the quarter beginning June 22nd are as follows: President, Wilfred H. Osgood; Vice-President, Harry R. Painton; Treasurer, Fred A. Schneider and Secretary, C. Barlow.

All who receive this Bulletin and wish to join us will oblige by notifying us promptly, and should you join, we shall be pleased to have your observations on the Song Sparrows and Shrikes accompany your letter. Give your experience whether it is extensive or not, together with nesting habits curious traits etc. and do not be afraid of making it lengthy. All observations should be in the Secretary's hands by the 15th and as much earlier as possible. The Bulletins hereafter will contain four or more pages of interesting material.

In view of the fact that a number of ornithological societies have been organized in the East and are now being very successfully conducted, we hope the collectors of California will lend their assistance to something which must prove successful if properly supported.

Finally, we invite anyone who can to be present at our meeting on the evening of August 15th, which will be held at the residence of the Secretary, 228 East San Carlos Street San Jose Cal.

*Berkeley, California, May 20, 1925.*

## A REVISIONARY STUDY OF THE WESTERN GULL

By DONALD R. DICKEY and A. J. VAN ROSSEM

**T**HE MANTLE tone and, more particularly, the color of the feet and legs of the Western Gull have long been subjects of interest to western bird students, but the published results of such studies have lacked that certain agreement which ordinarily follows independent and intensive field observation. Authorities have differed; some have stated that the feet of these birds were yellow; others have insisted that they were flesh colored. Curiously enough, these seemingly irreconcilable statements were both correct.

It has been sufficiently established that the feet and legs of the birds of this species which breed on the islands lying off the west coast of the United States are flesh colored. This statement is based not alone on the field experience of the writers, who

have observed many thousands of these birds in life, but also upon the authority of Major Allan Brooks<sup>1</sup> and of Mr. William L. Dawson<sup>2</sup>, each of whom has studied the matter and correctly recorded the facts. In a word, *Larus occidentalis*, as it breeds on the Pacific coast of California, Oregon, and Washington, varies in mantle color from light gray, in the north, to dark gray, in the south, but in the color of its feet and legs it remains constant. Throughout this nesting range it is a flesh-footed bird.

In April, 1925, it was the privilege of the junior writer to accompany Mr. Griffing Bancroft, of San Diego, on a short trip into the northern half of the Gulf of California. Western Gulls were breeding commonly on many of the islands at which the party touched. The mantle color of these birds seemed normal to one chiefly familiar with the nesting birds of the California coast, but something seemed "wrong" with them. Suddenly the cause of their unfamiliar appearance was clear. They had bright yellow feet and legs.

This trip extended southward in the Gulf only as far as San Pedro Martir Island, but the color of the feet of birds from as far south as San José Island has long been known as "lemon yellow" from the field data of Mr. W. W. Brown, Jr., who secured the type of *Larus occidentalis livens* at that island in 1912.<sup>3</sup> It is therefore assured that the Western Gull inhabiting the Gulf of California, from its northern islands south at least to San José Island, is a yellow-footed bird.

To summarize the situation: There is, first, a light-mantled, flesh-footed race, breeding on the off-shore islands of northern California, Oregon, and Washington; second, a dark-mantled, flesh-footed race, breeding on the islands of the Santa Barbara group of southern California, south at least to Los Coronados Islands, on the Pacific Coast of Lower California; and, third, an equally dark-mantled, but yellow-footed race, breeding on the islands of the Gulf of California. The first and third of these forms have already been named. We propose the following name for the southern California race.

*Larus occidentalis wymani*<sup>4</sup>, subsp. nov.  
Southern Western Gull

Type: Male adult, no. 15,250, collection of Donald R. Dickey; Santa Catalina Island, California; May 22, 1925; collected by A. J. van Rossem; original number 8329.

Description of type: Mantle and dorsal surface of wings deep neutral gray; four outer primaries chiefly black; next inner primary deep neutral gray, with black subterminal area approximately one and one-fourth inches in length; next inner primary similar, but with black subterminal area reduced to one-half inch in length; rest of plumage, including tips of primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, edge and lining of wing, and a subterminal mirror one and one-fourth inches in length on outer primary, pure white. Tarsi and feet flesh color, slightly bluish on tibia, the rosy flesh tone being most pronounced on webs; eyelids orange-yellow, shot with vermilion in posterior corner; bill wax-yellow, with orange-vermilion spot at angle of lower mandible; edge of gape flesh color; iris olive-buff<sup>5</sup>.

Subspecific characters: Similar in mantle color to *Larus occidentalis livens*, but feet flesh colored, and eyelids more orange, at least in the breeding season. Color of mantle darker than in *Larus occidentalis occidentalis*—deep neutral gray instead of light neutral gray—and with the four outer primaries extensively black, without gray wedges on inner webs.

<sup>1</sup> Condor, xxiv, May, 1922, p. 94.

<sup>2</sup> Birds of California, 1923, p. 1380.

<sup>3</sup> Proc. Biol. Soc. Wash., xxxii, 1919, p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> So named in recognition of the painstaking years spent by Mr. L. E. Wyman in the study of Western Gulls, and in appreciation of an ever-pleasant friendship.

<sup>5</sup> Ridgway's Color Standards and Color Nomenclature, 1912.

**Range:** Breeds on the islands along the coast of southern California, south at least to Los Coronados Islands, Lower California, and probably north to the Farallon Islands.

**Remarks:** According to Dr. Dwight (loc. cit., p. 12), the southern dark-mantled bird of the Pacific Coast, here characterized as *Larus occidentalis wymani*, breeds north to the Farallon Islands in fairly typical form. Unfortunately, the status of the Western Gulls of the Pacific Coast of Lower California, south of Los Coronados Islands, is unknown. Without this information, the question of intergradation between the yellow-footed and the flesh-footed types of this species cannot be finally determined. No intergradation has been shown to date. Under the circumstances, it is of course premature to hazard a prognosis, but it seems not unlikely to the authors that the yellow-footed bird of the Gulf will be recognized eventually as specifically distinct from the flesh-footed birds of the Pacific Coast proper.

The colors, in life, of the soft parts of an example of *Larus occidentalis livens* (no. 15,119, collection of Donald R. Dickey), taken by the junior writer on one of the Islas Encantadas group, in the Gulf of California, April 14, 1925, are as follows: Iris yellowish white. Bill (except for subterminal orange-vermilion spot on lower mandible), tarsi, feet (including webs), and eyelids, all of an even shade of bright wax-yellow. These data were checked by passing the feet and legs of a freshly taken specimen across the bill and eyelids. Under this test, no difference was discernible in the color of these parts.

A brief synopsis of the known breeding ranges of the three forms follows:

*Larus occidentalis occidentalis*, Northern Western Gull: Coastal islands of Washington, from Willoughby Rock and Carroll Islet (Dawson, loc. cit., p. 1379), south to Trinidad, Humboldt County, California (specimen no. 6,412, Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California).

*Larus occidentalis wymani*, Southern Western Gull: The islands along the coast of southern California, south at least to Los Coronados Islands, Lower California, and probably north to the Farallon Islands (Dwight, loc. cit., p. 12).

*Larus occidentalis livens*, Yellow-footed Western Gull: The Gulf of California, from Consag Rock and George Island south at least to San José Island.

*Pasadena, California, May 29, 1925.*

## A REPORT ON THE BIRDS OF NORTHWESTERN ALASKA AND REGIONS ADJACENT TO BERING STRAIT. PART IV

WITH FOUR PHOTOS

By ALFRED M. BAILEY

### ARCTIC TERN. *Sterna paradisaea*.

These terns are exceedingly numerous along the northern coast of Alaska and also have a very wide breeding range, which extends from southeastern Alaska, where there is a large colony of them nesting on the moraine in front of Norris and Taku glaciers, to the islands east of Point Barrow in Arctic Alaska. They were common throughout the summer at Nome; several pairs were seen over the tundra, June 1. Several were noted daily at St. Lawrence Island the latter part of June and the early part of July, and at St. Michael where they fed about the quiet waters of the bay. We also found a small nesting colony at Teller, on the bar near the village.